

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as shown in the marked-up copy following this Amendment to read as follows:

1. (Previously Amended) An absorbent polymer based on optionally partially neutralized, monoethylenically unsaturated monomers bearing acid groups, the surface of which polymer has been subjected to secondary crosslinking subsequent to polymerizing, wherein the polymer has cyclodextrins and/or cyclodextrin derivatives bound covalently and/or tonically and/or incorporated therein.
2. (Previously Amended) The polymer according to claim 1, wherein the polymer includes from 0.01 to 50 wt.-% of cyclodextrins and/or cyclodextrin derivatives, relative to the polymer.
3. (Previously Amended) The polymer according to claim 1, wherein a maximum of 85 wt.-% of the amount of cyclodextrins and/or cyclodextrin derivatives in the polymer is extractable with water.
4. (Previously Amended) The polymer according to claim 3, wherein the amount extractable with water is 60 wt.-% at maximum.
5. (Previously Amended) The polymer according to Claim 1, wherein the polymer is constituted up to 40 wt.-% of monoethylenically unsaturated monomers other than the monomers bearing acid groups.

6. (Previously Amended) The polymer according to Claim 1, wherein the polymer has from 0.05 to 3 wt.-% of a crosslinking monomer incorporated by polymerization.

7. (Previously Amended) The polymer according to Claim 1, wherein the polymer has 30 wt.-% of a water-soluble, natural or synthetic polymer incorporated therein by polymerization and/or graft polymerization.

8. (Previously Amended) The polymer according to Claim 1, wherein the polymer has been subjected to surface crosslinking using from 0.1 to 10 wt.-%, relative to the polymer, of a crosslinker component.

9. (Previously Amended) The polymer according to Claim 1, wherein the polymer contains α -, β -, or γ -cyclodextrins or derivatives thereof as cyclodextrins or derivatives thereof.

10. (Previously Amended) The polymer according to Claim 1, wherein the cyclodextrins or cyclodextrin derivatives are covalently bound to the polymer via ethylenically unsaturated groups.

11. (Previously Amended) The polymer according to Claim 1, wherein the cyclodextrins or cyclodextrin derivatives are tonically bound to the polymer via carboxylate, sulfate, sulfonate, or quaternary amino groups.

12. (Previously Amended) The polymer according to claim 11, wherein the cyclodextrins or cyclodextrin derivatives are bound to the polymer in a cationic fashion.

13. (Previously Amended) A process for producing the polymers according to Claim 1 by free-radical polymerization of an aqueous solution of the ethylenically unsaturated, optionally partially neutralized monomer bearing acid groups, optionally up to 40 wt.-% of further monoethylenically unsaturated comonomers, crosslinking monomers, and optionally up to 30 wt.-% of a water-soluble natural or synthetic polymer, optional isolation, crushing, and drying of the polymer, wherein the cyclodextrin and/or cyclodextrin derivative is already contained in the polymer during secondary surface crosslinking of same, or the polymer having undergone surface crosslinking is treated with an ionic cyclodextrin derivative.

14. (Previously Amended) The process according to claim 13, wherein the cyclodextrin and/or cyclodextrin derivative is incorporated prior to or during polymerization of the monomers and/or applied on an optionally obtained hydrogel and/or on optionally milled and dried polymer prior to or during surface crosslinking of the polymer.

15. (Previously Amended) The process according to Claim 13, wherein the cyclodextrin or cyclodextrin derivative is employed as substance or as a solution.

16. (Previously Amended) Use of the polymers according to Claim 1 as an absorbent for aqueous liquids, preferably in absorbing body fluids, in optionally foamed sheet materials, in packaging materials, in plant breeding, and as soil improver.

17. (Previously Amended) The use of polymers according to claim 16 in hygiene articles.

18. (Previously Amended) Use of the polymers according to Claim 1 as a vehicle and/or stabilizer for active substances or fertilizers being released optionally in a delayed fashion.

19. (Currently Amended) The polymer according to Claim 2, wherein the polymer comprises from 0.1 to 30 wt.% of cyclodextrins, and/or cyclodextrin derivatives relative to the weight of the polymer.

20. (Previously Presented) The polymer according to Claim 2, wherein the polymer comprises from 0.5 to 10 wt.-% of cyclodextrins, and/or cyclodextrin derivatives relative to the polymer.

21. (Previously Presented) The polymer according to Claim 4, wherein the amount extractable with water is 45% at maximum.

22. (Previously Presented) A method of stabilizing an active substance, comprising absorbing the active substance with the polymer according to Claim 1.

23. (New) An absorbent polymer composition comprising a polymer having polymerized units of one or more monoethylenically unsaturated monomers having one or more acid groups, and one or more cyclodextrins, cyclodextrin derivatives, or both, wherein the polymer is secondary surface crosslinked and wherein the cyclodextrins and the cyclodextrin derivatives are at least covalently bonded to the polymer, ionically bonded to the polymer or mixed with the polymer.

24. (New) The composition of Claim 23, wherein the polymerized monoethylenically unsaturated monomer units are neutralized.

25. (New) The composition of claim 23, wherein the cyclodextrins or cyclodextrin derivatives are present in an amount of from 0.01 to 50 wt.%, relative to the weight of the polymer.

26. (New) The composition of Claim 23, comprising from 0.1 to 30 wt.% of one or more cyclodextrins, cyclodextrin derivatives, or both, relative to the weight of the polymer.

27. (New) The composition of Claim 23, comprising from 0.5 to 10 wt.% of one or more cyclodextrins, cyclodextrin derivatives, or both, relative to the weight of the polymer.

28. (New) The composition of claim 23, wherein at most of 85 wt.% of the cyclodextrins, cyclodextrin derivatives, or both, are extractable with water.

29. (New) The composition of claim 23, wherein at most 60 wt.% of the cyclodextrins, cyclodextrin derivatives, or both, are extractable with water.

30. (New) The composition of Claim 23, wherein at most 45 wt.% of the cyclodextrins, cyclodextrin derivatives, or both, are extractable with water.

31. (New) The composition of Claim 23, wherein the polymer comprises up to 40 wt.% of polymerized units of one or more monoethylenically unsaturated monomers other than the monoethylenically unsaturated monomers having acid groups.

32. (New) The composition of Claim 23, wherein the polymer further comprises from 0.05 to 3 wt.% of one or more crosslinking monomers bonded to the polymer.

33. (New) The composition of Claim 23, wherein the polymer comprises up to 30 wt.% of a water-soluble, natural or synthetic polymer, polymerized or graft polymerized to the polymer.

34. (New) The composition of Claim 23, wherein the polymer is a crosslinked polymer obtained by contacting the polymer with from 0.1 to 10 wt.% of a crosslinker component, wherein wt.% is relative to the weight of the polymer.

35. (New) The composition of Claim 23, wherein the polymer comprises one or more α -, β -, or γ -cyclodextrins or cyclodextrin derivatives.

36. (New) The composition of Claim 23, wherein the cyclodextrins or cyclodextrin derivatives are covalently bonded to the polymer by ethylenically unsaturated groups.

37. (New) The composition of Claim 23, wherein the cyclodextrins or cyclodextrin derivatives are ionically bonded to the polymer by carboxylate, sulfate, sulfonate, or quaternary amino groups.

38. (New) The composition of Claim 34, wherein the cyclodextrins or cyclodextrin derivatives are cationically bonded to the polymer.

39. (New) A process for producing the composition of Claim 23, comprising

free-radical polymerization of an aqueous solution comprising one or more ethylenically unsaturated monomers having acid groups, up to 40 wt.% of other monoethylenically unsaturated comonomers, and one or more crosslinking monomers to form a polymer,

isolating and drying the polymer, then

crosslinking the surface of the polymer to form a surface crosslinked polymer,

wherein one or more cyclodextrins, cyclodextrin derivatives, or both are (1) added to the aqueous solution prior to or during the free radical polymerization; (2) applied onto a hydrogel of the polymer; (3) applied to or on the dried polymer; (4) applied to or on the surface crosslinked, dried polymer; or (5) applied to or on the surface of the dried polymer during crosslinking.

40. (New) The process according to Claim 39, wherein the cyclodextrins or cyclodextrin derivatives are added or applied as a solid or as a solution.

41. (New) A method comprising
absorbing aqueous fluids with a composition according to Claim 23.

42. (New) A process comprising
absorbing an active substance onto the composition according to Claim 23, and then releasing the active substrate.

43. (New) A process of stabilizing an active substance, comprising
absorbing the active substance with the polymer composition according to Claim 23.

44. (New) In a hygiene article, wherein the improvement comprises
an absorbent comprising the composition of Claim 23.

BASIS FOR THE AMENDMENT

Claims 1-44 are active in the present application. Claim 19 has been amended to correct a typographical error. Claims 23-44 are new claims. Support for the new claims is found in the original claims and throughout the specification. No new matter is believed to have been added by this amendment.